

REMARKS

Claims 25-30, 33, 35-39, and 41-43 are pending after the amendment. Claim 34 has been incorporated into independent Claim 25 and has been cancelled. The limitation incorporated into Claim 25 has been further clarified to specifically include the lamp border on the left and right sides of the main game display screen, shown in Figs. 1, 5, and 6. Claim 40 has been cancelled as not adding a further limitation to amended Claim 25.

The Specification has been amended as suggested by the examiner. The examiner had an objection to Claim 40, and Claim 40 has been cancelled.

It is important that the claimed dynamic lamp border run along the left and right sides of the main display since the lamp border is directly in the player's field of view and adds excitement, as well as drawing the player's attention to the game display rather than to another area of the gaming machine. In this way, the players' eyes are drawn to the main game display in response to the lamp border illumination, and the player is not made to believe that there is some other area of the gaming machine to concentrate on.

One function of the coordinated illumination of the lamp border, as recited in Claim 25, is to show which gaming machines are linked together, such as for a progressive jackpot game or a tournament. The lamp border is relatively inexpensive and does not take up much area.

Since Claim 34 (now cancelled) has been merged into Claim 25, the examiner's rejection of Claim 34 is the most pertinent rejection. The Examiner rejected Claim 34 as being obvious in view of the combination of Bennett (WO 00/32286) and DeMar (US 6,315,660). The pertinent aspects of these two references are summarized below.

Bennett describes three linked slot machines in Figs. 19a-19d, which dynamically display Mr. Cashman walking from one top box screen to the next. The existence of a Mr. Cashman indicates that the slot machines temporarily have the beneficial features associated with Mr. Cashman, such as special awards. The examiner indicated that the top box in which Mr. Cashman appears met the limitations in the unamended Claim 25 wherein: 1) the top box screen is "a plurality of lamps of different colors forming a border"; and 2) the top

box screen is a lamp border partially surrounding the game display (albeit only over the top of the main game screen and relatively distant therefrom).

The pertinent aspect of DeMers is that DeMers shows a top box above the main display, where the top box is a backlit Monopoly board. The Monopoly board spaces would be selectively illuminated by backlights to highlight a relevant space during the bonus game. Even if the DeMers slot machines were linked in a network, the Monopoly board backlights of various linked machines would not be controlled in a coordinated manner to indicate the machines are linked.

The combination of Bennett and DeMers (without impermissible hindsight) would logically be Bennett's top box that displays Mr. Cashman and a separate Monopoly board. The examiner indicated that the combination would suggest Mr. Cashman walking completely around the game machine.

Applicant's amended Claim 25 includes the limitation of: "selectively illuminating the lamps of the linked gaming machines running along the left and right sides of each gaming machine's display in a coordinated manner to indicate to players that the gaming machines are linked and share a common feature." The display displays the "main game."

As described above, the location of the dynamic lamp border along the left and right sides of the main display is important since it does not draw the player's attention away from the center portion of the machine where the main game is displayed.

In Bennett, even if the top screen is considered to comprise "a plurality of lamps of different colors," as recited in Claim 25, it does not accomplish the purpose or function of the border lamps of Applicant's Claim 25. Further, a top box display screen could not suggest a border of colored lamps running along the left and right sides of the main display.

DeMers could not suggest to modify Bennett to provide the claimed border lamps since the only reason DeMers shows lights (all of the same color) is to backlight a square on a Monopoly board. Without the Monopoly theme, there is no suggestion to provide lamps in DeMers.

Although the examiner concluded that DeMers suggests to have Mr. Cashman walk completely around the main game display, this would not be suggested by the combination.

Such a device would require a display screen in the shape of a rectangular racetrack, which would take up way too much area around the main display to be practical and would be prohibitively expensive. Further, there would be no benefit to have Mr. Cashman walk around the main display, so there is no motivation. Further, as mentioned above, the DeMers rectangular display is only for the purpose of showing a Monopoly board, and it would not make sense to have Mr. Cashman walk around the Monopoly board.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that amended Claim 25 and its dependent claims are respectfully submitted to be allowable.

In view of the above arguments, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of all pending claims. Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (408) 382-0480 ext. 202.

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